

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 17

Whereas, the cost of a four-year college education increases each year; and

Whereas, in response to the ever-increasing cost of a college education, the federal government created Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code, which authorized states to create federal tax-deferred higher education savings programs; and

Whereas, each state has established at least one higher education savings program under the auspices of Section 529; and

Whereas, the state of Missouri established the Missouri Higher Education Savings Program in 1998 to allow parents, grandparents, and any other family members or friends to create tax-deferred higher education savings accounts for a child's future education; and

Whereas, in order to encourage Missouri families to invest in the Missouri Higher Education Savings Program, the state authorizes a participant in the program to deduct up to eight thousand dollars in contributions to the program from the participant's adjusted gross income in determining the amount of state income tax owed; and

Whereas, there is a disincentive for investment in other states' higher education savings programs since the income tax deduction only applies to investments in Missouri's savings program; and

Whereas, parents and families should be afforded every opportunity to invest in the best savings programs, since the goal of higher education savings programs is to increase the amount of money available for a child's higher education:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Missouri Senate, Ninety-third General Assembly, First Regular Session, the House of Representatives concurring therein, hereby create a Joint Interim Committee on Investments in Higher Education Savings Programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the joint interim committee shall study methods to expand investment opportunities for Missouri parents and families in higher education savings programs, while maintaining the solvency of the Missouri Higher Education Savings Program, and make recommendations to the General Assembly; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the joint interim committee be authorized to call upon any department, office, division, or agency of this state to assist in gathering information pursuant to its objective; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the joint interim committee herein established shall consist of ten members, three of which shall be members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate, two of which shall be members of the Senate appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate, three of which shall be members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and two of which shall be members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the staffs of House Research, Senate Research, and the Committee on Legislative Research shall provide such legal, research, clerical, technical, and bill drafting services as the committee may require in the performance of its duties; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee, its members, and any staff assigned to the committee shall receive reimbursement for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in attending meetings of the committee or any subcommittee thereof; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the joint interim committee shall expire on December 31, 2005, and on that same date deliver a report of findings and recommendations to the General Assembly; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate be instructed to prepare a properly inscribed copy of this resolution for the President Pro Tem of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.